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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PRM'S GRANT TO NGO  
SEEDS OF PEACE

REF: A. BARTLETT-KANESHIRO TELCON OF 05/24/06

- [1](#)B. KIRBY-KANESHIRO EMAIL OF 10/21/05
- [1](#)C. 05 AMMAN 5832
- [1](#)D. 04 AMMAN 1721
- [1](#)E. 03 AMMAN 1477

[1](#)1. (U) This message contains a monitoring and evaluation report on the \$90,000 grant PRM awarded to the U.S. non-profit organization Seeds of Peace (SPRMC005GR140) to help it extend its conflict resolution programming to Palestinian refugee youth residing in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza during FY06, keyed to questions provided in ref B. Seeds of Peace (SOP) has implemented three similar agreements for PRM since 2002.

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SOURCES  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Amman-based regional refcoord monitored SOP's implementation of its current PRM grant in December 2005, and again in May 2006. On December 8, 2005 she reviewed the recruitment strategy SOP planned to use this year to increase the number of refugees participating in summer camp sessions held at SOP's International Camp facility in Maine with Sami Al Jundi, the supervisor of SOP's "Jerusalem Center for Co-Existence," who is also the staff member with primary responsibility for recruiting Arab youth. She met Sami Al Jundi again on May 18 at SOP's Jerusalem offices, using that field visit to also evaluate financial controls and personnel management through interviews with Jerusalem Center Administrative and Public Relations Manager Reem Mustafa and Jerusalem Center Coordinator of Media and Governmental Development Eric Kapenga. As explained in paragraph 13, refcoord was unable to meet the Director of SOP's Jerusalem Center, who was responsible for supervising day-to-day implementation of PRM-funded activities for most of this grant's implementation period, as he was out of the region for extended periods between September 2005 and April 2006. Instead, she conducted remote monitoring by phone on May 23 with Stephen Flanders, SOP's new New York-based Chief Operating Officer, who has been brought in to carry out a complete reorganization of SOP starting this summer (see paragraph 13 for details). As reported ref A, Flanders made an unexpected request for a no-cost grant extension covering 100% of its current grant during that call, informing refcoord that SOP had not taken any immediate remedial actions to met the objectives in its current agreement.

[1](#)3. (U) Refcoord also discussed SOP's efforts to utilize the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in its refugee recruitment efforts

-- a new condition of its grant -- with UNRWA Education Department Director Kabir Shaikh May 22.

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OVERALL ASSESSMENT  
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¶4. (SBU) As with its previous three PRM grants, SPRMCO05GR140's core objective is to increase the number of Palestinian refugee youth attending the summer camp sessions that Seeds of Peace has organized for youth from the region since 1993 to teach tolerance and conflict resolution techniques, through a joint-funding arrangement (currently \$90,000 from PRM and \$15,000 from private donors). Unlike those agreements, this grant calls on SOP to involve UNRWA in its recruitment efforts, a new objective designed to help SOP overcome the access problems that prompted staff in 2004-2005 to initiate an unauthorized community service program in two UNRWA refugee camps to rehabilitate its image as an "American NGO" (ref C). Also, this agreement no longer supports the year-round activities which SOP staff in Jerusalem organize to try to sustain former Israeli and Palestinian campers, involvement in co-existence activities until they reach age 24, following SOP's acknowledgment that it had failed to find viable methods to increase refugee participation in these local programs after three years, and could not apply lessons learned from those aborted attempts during an anticipated reorganization of its regional offices (refs C-E).

¶5. (SBU) Three years into its efforts to target refugees, the number of Palestinian youth from the West Bank and Gaza with refugee status participating in SOP's "core" summer camp program has fallen to 2003 levels (10 campers) -- well below its current grant target of 25. Hamas' victory in the January Palestinian legislative elections contributed to SOP's inability to meet the terms of its grant. Under Hamas'

leadership, the PA Education Ministry re-established its boycott of Seeds of Peace. SOP responded by reaching out to private schools and individual (Fatah) politicians to identify potential candidates -- a move that inadvertently prevented it from recruiting any female youth from Gaza this year. SOP's recruitment in the West Bank was also affected. While SOP has not been subject to direct threats, increased security concerns compelled its Jerusalem staff to restrict their activities to Fatah strongholds (primarily Ramallah), reversing inroads SOP had made to UNRWA camps in Jenin in ¶2005. At the same time, SOP has been slow in completing a planned reorganization of its regional offices (underway since late 2004), leaving staff in Jerusalem in limbo, with interim and often absent managers who were unable to maintain any focus on using PRM funds to develop sustainable targeting methods. Even with the impetus of external funding and engagement from PRM, SOP is slowly working to involve organizations such as UNRWA that have direct and broad access to refugee youth in its recruitment processes. SOP appears committed to carrying out a complete reorganization that should remedy its "management gap," but informed refcoord May 23 that it cannot take remedial actions to raise refugee participation before September.

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PERFORMANCE MEASURED AGAINST PLANNED OBJECTIVES  
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¶6. (U) GRANT OBJECTIVE A -- INCREASE REFUGEES ATTENDING SOP'S MAINE CAMP TO 23-25 PERSONS: SOP requested \$90,000 to support its objective of increasing the number of refugees in its summer camp program from 15 in 2005 to 23-25 in 2006 (i.e., \$12,500 in staff support for the recruitment and selection process, and \$72,500 to finance refugees' participation in pre-departure preparatory classes and their actual travel expenses). On May 23, SOP's New York-based Chief Operating Officer informed refcoord that SOP had finished its 2006 camp selection and had not met its target. Of the 60 Palestinians SOP recruited to participate in camps this summer, only nine appear to hold refugee status: six from Gaza, two from Jericho and one from Ramallah. NOTE: SOP

maintains no database on its campers, making it difficult to confirm whether it is meeting its recruitment objectives. However, it is refining its verification methods. In previous years, SOP used residency in an UNRWA camp as its working definition of a refugee. This year, SOP started asking campers for UNRWA registration cards to verify their refugee status. END NOTE. As of May 30, SOP was unable to verify whether any of the adult "delegation leaders" it also recruits to accompany youth to Maine (and who could also be supported under the terms of its grant) are refugees. Paragraph 9 describes the selection criteria/process SOP used.

17. (SBU) As was the case in 2005, Israeli travel restrictions could still affect actual camp attendance. Administrative Manager Reem Mustafa reported May 18 that the GOI had agreed to facilitate the travel of campers from the West Bank, including providing authorization to travel to the U.S. via Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv. However, the GOI has refused to allow campers from Gaza to use Ben Gurion. As was the case in 2005, SOP plans to send campers from Gaza via Cairo.

18. (U) OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: Apart from raising numerical refugee recruitment targets, SOP's current grant measures performance based on SOP's ability to involve UNRWA in its recruitment, and to ensure refugees participate in pre-departure orientation seminars and post-camp attitudinal surveys. Political developments and internal organizational issues prevented SOP from establishing a working relationship with UNRWA, and are reported in detail at paragraph 10. Refcoord verified that SOP is preparing to include refugee youth in the two-day, pre-camp orientation classes scheduled to take place one week prior to departure for Maine (i.e., June 13-14 and July 13-14) during her May 18 monitoring trip. Attitudinal surveys are scheduled to take place post-camp, and cannot currently be measured.

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ACCESS TO TARGET BENEFICIARIES AND COORDINATION ISSUES  
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19. (SBU) HAMAS VICTORY LIMITS COORDINATION: January's Palestinian Legislative Council election results limited SOP's ability to work with partners who have direct access to refugee youth, particularly in the West Bank. SOP staff responsible for recruitment rely heavily on regional governments, limiting their role to screening candidates who are nominated by the Israeli and PA Education Ministries.

Prior to the Palestinian Legislative elections, SOP intended to work primarily through the PA Education Ministry, as it had done in 2005. According to Al Jundi, mid-level Fatah-affiliated contacts at the PA Education Ministry informed him in mid-February that the new Hamas-led Education Ministry had effectively re-established the boycott the PA placed on SOP at the start of the second Intifada. NOTE: SOP staff are aware of USG "no contact rules" and would have avoided working with the PA Education Ministry had its boycott not been in place. END NOTE. Despite the fact that the PA's Education Ministry has boycotted SOP programs for four of the past five years, SOP continues to find it difficult to develop substitute partners that have comparable geographic scope.

110. (SBU) NO UNRWA ROLE IN RECRUITMENT: In Gaza, SOP reverted to the network of individual (Fatah-affiliated) politicians that it used in 2002-2003, asking long-time political contacts Saeb Erekat and the wife of former Minister Dahlan to identify potential campers. With that network, SOP made no effort to include UNRWA in its recruitment in Gaza this year. In the West Bank, UNRWA's West Bank Field Education Program Director failed to respond positively to an approach Al Jundi made in February, inviting him to nominate 23 campers by the end of that month. Jundi reported that UNRWA informed him that they feared retaliation from Hamas. Asked about UNRWA's decision not to participate in SOP recruitment, UNRWA HQ Education Program Director Kabir Shaikh confirmed that Hamas' victory had played a role in UNRWA's decision, but stressed that the primary reason UNRWA was unable to

participate was the fact that SOP had given UNRWA less than three weeks to identify candidates, at a time when it was focused on emergency contingency planning. Shaikh added that UNRWA informed SOP that it would be willing to participate in SOP's next recruitment cycle.

#### IMPACT: INROADS TO JENIN CAMPS LOST, NO GIRLS IN GAZA

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¶11. (SBU) Without UNRWA support, SOP reverted to inviting private schools to nominate candidates. Unlike previous years, however, SOP staff limited their outreach in the West Bank. SOP did not recruit in Jenin, Hebron and Nablus this year. Initially, Al Jundi attributed this to the lack of private schools in those cities, but he later acknowledged that SOP staff are only working in "areas where Fatah can offer security and there is an NGO presence." Asked if staff were reacting to direct threats -- as was the case in 2003 when PFLP supporters actively broke up an SOP workshop in Ramallah -- Al Jundi said that was not the case; their measures were pre-emptive. NOTE: Israel's permit system is not affecting SOP Palestinian staff's travel to the degree it did in 2005 (ref C). SOP staff attribute the improvement to SOP's decision to join the State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council's new Jerusalem Country Council, which issues membership cards to this network of American NGOs and private organizations that they claim help facilitate their movement through checkpoints. END NOTE. As a result, SOP was unable to maintain the inroads it made into Jenin Camp last year. However, its recruitment of three refugee youth in the West Bank is not a significant drop from 2005 (one person).

¶12. (SBU) Surprisingly, SOP staff maintained some refugee recruitment in Gaza this year -- a major achievement reached in the last program cycle. NOTE: In 2001, when PRM first started funding SOP's refugee recruitment efforts, SOP was only able to identify and secure travel permits for refugees who held Jerusalem IDs. SOP slowly expanded its program to refugees from the West Bank in 2002-2003, but was unable to recruit refugee in Gaza until 2005, when the PA lifted its three-year boycott on SOP. END NOTE. However, SOP was unable -- for the first time in its history -- to recruit any female Palestinian campers from Gaza, a development Al Jundi attributed to their contacts inability to resist overwhelming social pressures. COMMENT: In the past, SOP had done a good job establishing gender balance in its summer camp caseload; 51 percent of its past summer camp participants were male and 49 percent female in 2005. END COMMENT.)

#### ----- ADDITIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION -----

¶13. (SBU) LACK OF MANAGERIAL OVERSIGHT: While SOP staff in Jerusalem responsible for implementing PRM-funded activities are clearly working in a more difficult operating environment, their inability to meet their recruitment

targets appears to also be due to SOP's inability to move forward with a planned reorganization of its regional offices. Tim Wilson, the Director of SOP's International Camp facility in Maine who was brought in to head Jerusalem operations on an interim basis in September 2004, remained in charge of PRM-funded projects until May 2006. However, he was absent from the field for more than 50% of the time, leaving comparatively junior staff to respond to implementation problems. It was clear that Jerusalem staff were frustrated with lack of engagement of SOP HQ. They report that SOP HQ made no effort to address the UNRWA coordination issue when they reported that UNRWA field staff had resisted their overtures. NOTE: SOP Washington did not comment on the UNRWA coordination issue in its interim report. END NOTE. SOP managers have made no effort to engage officials from UNRWA's HQ nor its West Bank and Gaza Fields. In addition, SOP staff in Jerusalem did not have coherent responses when asked during monitoring visits/calls how SOP planned to meet its refugee recruiting targets, suggesting

that senior management has not made increasing refugee participation a clear program goal. COMMENT: In refcoord's view, SOP might have reached its grant target without UNRWA had it revised its vetting procedures to include questions designed to identify Palestinian youth with refugee status at the interview stage. SOP staff in Jerusalem rebut this argument, saying that adding refugee status as an explicit selection criteria would have weakened their standards. SOP continues to use English language skills (measured through standardized exams), academic excellence, and demonstrated leadership and social skills as selection criteria for its summer camp program. END COMMENT.

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STAFFING, WORKPLACE CONDITIONS AND CONTROLS  
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¶14. (SBU) STAFF QUALIFICATIONS: SOP currently employs nine full-time and 11 part-time staff in the region. Two full-time staff work on PRM-funded activities on a part-time basis: Center Supervisor Al Jundi and Administrative and Public Relations Manager Reem Mustafa. Both are based at Seeds' Jerusalem Center, and appeared fully and gainfully employed during refcoord's May 18 monitoring visit. Al Jundi has been with SOP longer than any other Jerusalem Center staffer. He has recruited Arab youth for SOP for six years, but appears to have lost his authority to initiate new recruiting methods since SOP fired former Center Director Jen Marlowe (ref C) in 2004. He presents SOP's mission well, thinks critically about appropriate use of funds and is responsive to refcoord queries, but is concerned that SOP senior managers are replacing "co-existence" activities with "uni-national" programming. Mustafa is responsible for making travel arrangements for SOP campers. Also a long-time SOP employee, she has demonstrated her ability to carry out the extensive coordination with Israeli military authorities required to ensure Palestinian campers can travel to Maine. Their direct supervisor (and the senior SOP manager responsible for PRM grant implementation), Jerusalem Center Director Tim Wilson, was not present during refcoord monitoring. Wilson will not return to the region as his position has recently phased out as part of a major internal re-organization that will reportedly involve shutting SOP's Jerusalem Center and replacing it with two offices in Tel Aviv and Ramallah. SOP's new Chief Operations Officer took over management of Jerusalem Center on an interim basis in May.

¶15. (U) OFFICES AND EQUIPMENT: Refugee camp recruitment is run out of the Jerusalem Center for Co-Existence that SOP established in 1999 to provide office space and a meeting site for the follow-up activities it organizes for Palestinian-Israeli camp graduates. The Center is located in the French Hill area of East Jerusalem in a clean and spacious private four-floor house that was being used both as office space and a workshop/seminar site for former campers resident in Jerusalem during refcoord's monitoring visit. Office equipment appeared in good working condition, but was not purchased with PRM funding. As noted above, Chief Operating Officer Flanders informed refcoord May 23 that SOP intends to close its Jerusalem Center this summer.

¶16. (SBU) FINANCIAL AND INVENTORY CONTROLS: SOP's office in Maine handles SOP's finances, but SOP's Jerusalem Center employs a part-time accountant as well as an external Israeli accountant who provides periodic audits. SOP appears to have appropriate inventory controls.

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SPHERE STANDARDS AND CODES OF CONDUCT  
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¶17. (U) SOP does not implement "assistance" programs, and does not use SPHERE standards to design its programming. It is willing to try to do so if requested. SOP has a code of conduct in its staff handbook that advises them of their obligations to report any suspected sexual exploitation and



abuse of beneficiaries. No such cases were reported as of May 30.

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ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY  
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¶18. (SBU) After three years of funding, SOP's refugee recruitment strategies are still in a "development" phase. SOP could "mainstream" refugee recruitment without the impetus of external funding if it made refugee status a clear selection criteria and developed additional partners, particularly with organizations like UNRWA that have a broad mandate to education refugee youth in Gaza and the West Bank.

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RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS  
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¶19. (SBU) SOP's programs work directly to advance an important USG goal of combating extremism. To date, there is no duplication with PRM-funded tolerance projects being implemented by UNRWA. However, available NGO funding is limited and humanitarian conditions in the region are deteriorating, and it is crucial that SOP start to view PRM support as a platform to "mainstream" refugee recruitment into its regular recruitment practices given that the 75-80% Palestinian youth in Gaza and 30% in the West Bank have refugee status. Without senior program managers on the ground, there has been a breakdown in efforts to develop a sustainable refugee targeting approach. SOP's new Chief Operating Officer informally approached refcoord on May 23 for a 6-9 month no-cost grant extension to try to reach its the refugee recruitment targets in its current grant in 2007. Refcoord believes that Flanders is committed to bridging the management gap that has existed in Jerusalem for over a year. However, he is planning to close SOP's Jerusalem Co-Existence Center and open two new "uni-national" offices in Tel Aviv and Ramallah this summer, the largest reorganization SOP has undergone in its history and one which is likely to affect SOP's implementation capacity. If this grant extension is formally submitted, PRM will need to work with SOP and appropriate UNRWA officials to develop sustainable access to candidates. Refcoord also recommends that PRM encourage SOP to develop a database that will help it track refugee participation in its programs and/or revise selection criteria used in its interview process to include refugee status.

¶20. (U) ConGen Jerusalem cleared this message.

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